Denon Night of Ultimate Enigma

"Cheer up, Cade," Deliah Blue said brightly, her arms hugging one of his as they walked through the streets of Ravelin, the capital of the Fel Empire. With Bastion fully recovered from the Yuuzhan Vong War a century earlier, it had again become the bustling center of the Empire. "It's not every day you get to see your cousins, second cousins, distant cousins, and…"

"I got the idea," Cade cut her off, a slight smile playing on his lips.

"You're not intimidated by them at all, are you?" Deliah continued playfully, giving a flirting wink at a passerby who had been checking her out. Said man walked into a nearby sign-post as his brain short-circuited.

Cade couldn't blame the poor man—she filled out the heavily modified Imperial officer's uniform in a very distracting manner. The outfit Deliah was wearing was several dozen centimeters of cloth away from becoming the first micro-bikini version of an Imperial officer's uniform. The black color accented her pink skin and bright purple eyes. If he hadn't practically grown up with her at his side, he would be staring too. "Please, so what if a few of my cousins command whole fleets and will inherit empires. I'm perfectly happy with the *Mynock* and the scavenging business we run."

"And there's the whole hand-wavy side of your family too," Deliah pointed out.

"I can think of better things to do with my hands than wave them about and make things float," Cade retorted.

"And don't I know it," Deliah grinned at him. "Ooo, look, there's one of your handy-wavy cousins now!"

"Rein," Cade greeted his younger cousin after Deliah waved him over. It was hard not to miss Rein Skywalker and his short-cut coppery hair. Cade raised an eyebrow at the young woman at Rein's side. "Oh, and Kyra."

"I know, I know," Kyra chuckled. "After four generations of Skywalker-Durron relations flaming out in dramatic, super-nova fashion, you'd think we'd know better by now."

"Fifth time should definitely work, right Cade?"

"No one ever said the Skywalker line wasn't persistent," Cade said drolly.

"Or the Solo-line for that matter," Rein had turned to look over his shoulder as a commotion sounded behind them. The crowd occupying the Ravelin streets broke out into hush whispers as they spotted a retinue of heavily armed guards march in formation in front of a group of four others.

"Crown Prince of Hapes, *Chum'da* Jayden Jace Sira'da Djo," Deliah whistled lightly, watching the good-sized group cross the street towards them. "Commander of the Galactic Alliance Eighth Fleet and Spare to the Throne."
"Deliah."
"All of it true."
"Don't forget one lucky royal guy," Rein pointed out the three others surrounding Jayden. "Only twenty-two but already married and with two consorts. He might not be in line for the throne, but I doubt he'd want to trade what he has for anything."
"Trying to tell me something, Skywalker?" Kyra raised an eyebrow at her boyfriend.
"I am perfectly happy with what I have and wouldn't trade it for anything either," Rein said hastily.
"It?"
"You…I wouldn't trade you for…not that you're something to be traded…Cade help me out here!"
"I give you two a month, tops," Cade said dryly.
"Thanks for the support, cus'."
"You've got to admit, Rein. They don't call it the Skywalker-Durron curse for nothing," Cade said.
"You don't have to help by being unhelpful."
"Cade! Rein!" Jayden waved at them with a grin and made his way over with his retinue in tow. "Deliah, Kyra."
"Jayden," Rein waved back.
"Hiya," Kyra added.
"You remember my wife, Tala," Jayden gestured to the petite woman at his side. "And my consorts, Arissa Roh and Rosynn Gheer."
"Yeah, still confused on that consort business. Isn't it normally the guy who's the consort?" Deliah pointed out.
"Sure." Jayden rolled his eyes and wrapped his arms around his wife. "And I'm supposed to marry someone from another noble family and not a non-Hapan orphaned daughter of criminals who I originally brought from a black-market flesh-trader with my first allowance when I was eight."
"When you put it that way, who cares about the traditions," Deliah laughed.
"I think my little sis got the rawer deal," Jayden said, his tone light but his mood shifting slightly. Tala reached up and gently squeezed one of his arms in comfort. "All she has to do is ask me and I'll swap places with her. But she has it in her head that she has to become the next Queen Mother because the entire Hapan Corridor expects her to."

"*Chume'da* Lilia Grace is strong, my husband," Tala said softly, letting her hand trace down his arm so that she could interlace her fingers with his. "Physical difficulties aside, her will is unsurpassed and her heart kind. She will be an excellent leader for the Hapan peoples."
"I don't doubt that. But she'll be constrained by custom and forced to do things according to what the nobles think is right and proper," Jayden said grimly. "As the figurehead of the Eighth Fleet, I don't have to worry about all that custom and political intrigue. Well, at least not until another noble house decides to send one of their house-funded capital ships to join my fleet."
The group resumed their trek through the streets of Ravelin, drawing stares from all around. They did cut quite the image, and their faces were very recognizable.
"So…" Rein said hesitantly in a low voice as Deliah and Kyra immediately began chatting up Jayden's consorts and wife as if they were long-time friends. "How does it all work?"
"Work?"
"You know…with three of them," Rein murmured, gesturing with a hand to Rosynn, Arissa, and Tala.
"Sheer luck," Jayden said solemnly. "Ro was…is my best friend growing up. Beginning of my rabble-rousing I guess."
"Gheer's a rival house to the throne, right?" Rein nodded, following along.
"Right," Jayden glanced fondly at the dark-skinned woman in the garb of a Hapan SigTel officer. "My dad and mom found it hilarious that at five years old I was already upsetting the sensibilities of the more close-minded in the court."
"If it's okay to ask, how come she isn't your wife?" Rein kept his voice low.
"House politics," Jayden's expression soured. "But the ones that protested probably are kicking themselves because of who I did marry."
"And Arissa?"
"Assigned to be my bodyguard when we were both eleven. We had a lot of shared interests and things just developed from there," Jayden shrugged. "She's also saved my life twice already."
"I thought Hapan nobles were above assassinating the royal family now?" Cade spoke up.
"They weren't targeting me," Jayden muttered, glancing towards his wife. "You know how Hapes is still a matrilineal, matriarchal society? When word got out that I was in love with Tala and planned to marry her, some decided that it didn't fit the image of what a Hapan royal

should be. I was throwing away my genetics for someone with no pedigree, ties to Hapes, and worse yet, a slave. Ari nearly died shielding Tala from a sniper. If it weren't for the Yuuzhan Vong healer…"
"Sorry, didn't mean to bring up bad memories," Rein muttered, looking away.
"No, it's okay," Jayden shook his head. "Let's just say that Ari literally gave her heart to protect mine. She has a Yuuzhan Vong-created, flash-cloned heart beating in her as proof of that. Both Ari and Ro are fiercely protective of Tala, and I love them even more because of that."
"Whatcha boys talking about?" Deliah hopped back to rejoin them, once again ensnaring Cade's arm.
"The great Hapan love-story in the making," Cade pointed to Jayden.
"Ooo, I *love* love stories! Do tell."
"He's in love with his best friend, his closest protector, and his protectee," Cade summed up.
"You're no fun," Deliah swatted him.
"Ask Tala," Jayden blushed at the concentrated look Deliah was sending his way. "She's a way better storyteller than I am."
"Will do," Deliah beamed, disengaging herself from Cade to rejoin the girls.
"I don't think that's a regulation Imperial uniform," Jayden breathed out, shaking his head.
"When she heard we were coming to Bastion, she also had a swimwear version of that made. Even less cloth," Cade deadpanned. "Several of them in different sizes, in case the other girls like it and wanted to try it on. You know, Zeltrons. What can you do if they want to have some fun and spread the cheer?"
Jayden nodded dumbly, his gaze flicking to the three women he loved and no doubt imagining them in said swimwear. Then glanced to Rein and saw that Rein was studiously looking away from the group of girls.
"Not even thinking about it?"
"My girlfriend's a Jedi," Rein said dryly. "Believe me, she knows when I'm thinking about her like that."
"What do you think they're talking about?" Cade glanced to the women.
"Plotting evil deeds no doubt," Jayden cleared his throat and shook whatever image he had from his head. "Let us go interrupt it before the deeds become too evil. Especially since your girlfriend is with them, Cade."
The group reformed and continued up out of the city along a side-street. Normally they'd have used speeders, but all three parties spent

a large part of their lives in starships and appreciated the chance to stretch their legs and take in the sights. The side-street took them up a winding mountainous road, vegetation and wildlife abundant.
"There's Aidan's place," Kyra voiced as they turned the corner. Then blinked in astonishment. "Wow. Talk about mansion. When he said it was the first training place of the Imperial Knights, I was thinking more military base than anything. Not…that."
"I guess being the only son of Roan and Elliah Fel has its benefits." Rein breathed out.
"I have a summer house that's bigger," Jayden said with a quirk of his lips.
"It's not the size that counts," Deliah grinned at the regent, not at all intimidated by the fact that the young man controlled fleets and was in line to rule hundreds of star systems.
"Size? We have no complaints," Rosynn Gheer smirked in turn, draping an arm around Tala and a stone-faced Arissa. "His summer home is quite pleasurable to live in."
"Yes, yes," Jayden flushed. "Cade, stop your girlfriend from corrupting my own."
"Deliah, stop," Cade said in complete deadpan with no urgency whatsoever.
"Cade," Deliah pouted.
"Do it when he's not around so he can't complain to me," Cade finished.
"Thanks," Jayden sighed.
As the group began to near the building, they could see that they were among the last to arrive.
"Looks like most of the others are already here," Cade pointed out the speeders parked in front of the walled compound. Standing guard in front of a towering metal gate were several figures dressed in the highly recognizable robes of the Imperial Knights. He recognized one and mentally groaned. Deliah looked in the direction he was gazing at, and reflexively took a step to his side and latched onto him.
"Halt!" A voice called out as the group approached.
The Imperial Knights on duty fanned out, but relaxed slightly as they recognized those before them.
"Cade," red-haired Imperial Knight Captain Azlyn Rae greeted her former classmate with a small smile as she strode to the front of the Imperial Knight formation.
"Azlyn," Cade returned the grin, mindful of Deliah's tightened grip on his arm. He did his best not to betray any emotions, but his history with the Imperial Knight was almost as long and strong as Jayden's

history was with Jayden's wife and consorts. He couldn't help but feel specters of their relationship and Force-bond flare up at his proximity with her.
"Been a while," Azlyn said guardedly.
"Five years," Cade nodded. "You made captain."
"You made scavenger," Azlyn replied with the usual dry Imperial humor, golden eyes shining with amusement. She took a step closer, as if to embrace him. "By the way, thanks for going out of your way and saving my people last month. If you send the bill to me, I can handle any damages your ship took."
"Just being a good citizen of the galaxy," Cade breathed out, her golden eyes almost hypnotizing. Deliah squeezed his arm a bit tighter, and Cade cleared his throat. "Any way, we're here for Aidan's party."
"Yeah, your group is the last one to arrive," Azlyn confirmed, stepping back and glancing at Deliah. "Don't worry, Dels. You won fair and square. He chose you."
Cade couldn't help but flinch at the echoing pain that reverberated through his bond with Azlyn. "Azlyn."
"Go on inside," she breathed out, a professional façade falling into place. "Plenty of surprises in place for the party, don't want to miss one."
The Imperial Knight Captain spun on her heels and retreated back towards the guardhouse.
"Come on," Jayden said gently, placing a brief hand on Cade's shoulder. "Let's go."
"Right," Cade exhaled. "Let's."
The memories from his time with Azlyn continued to play in his mind as they walked up the cobblestone walkway through the highly manicured bushes and trees that lined the mansion's grounds. Though it had been five years since they had last seen each other, it had been a few years longer than that since their last actual conversation. Memories of his time training alongside her in the Imperial Knight Academy, their relationship that started out as an awkward teenage crush, would forever be cemented in his mind.
He still remembered that final kiss he had shared with her, standing on a landing pad with the moon shining high above. The feel of her hands, lips, her scent, the way she said 'goodbye' in a sad, final sort of way as they stepped apart. That night, he had chosen Deliah over her. Cade's heart still beat hard just thinking of that moment.
The others walked ahead, giving Deliah and Cade some semblance of privacy.

"Sure you have no regrets?" Deliah's playful demeanor had vanished as she rested her head against his shoulder while they walked. Her voice became soft, almost a whisper, as she continued on. "I told you before, right? Even after all these years, you can still choose her. I'd understand. I don't know anything about the Force, but I know you had some kind of bond with her. That choosing me hurt you both. I just want you to be happy, Cade. That's all I've ever cared about. Always and forever."

Cade stopped them where they were and pulled Deliah to his front. The Zeltron's blue eyes widened at his abrupt action, and then widened even further as he bent forward and kissed her with exquisite gentleness. When the kiss was over, he brushed her cheek with the pad of his thumb gazing into her earnest eyes. "I told you before, and I'll tell you again. I love you, Deliah Blue. Always and forever. Don't ever sell yourself short, 'kay?"

Deliah stepped forward and nodded into his chest, gripping his shirt and smiling as happy tears soaked the cloth. Taking a long breath, inhaling his scent as she did, she stepped back and wiped away the last of her tears. "'Kay, enough mushiness, let's go see how the Imperials party."

NUE I NUE

The usual suspects were already present and enjoying the lavished spread of food and various entertainment that Aidan Fel had provided. Music, holo-vids, sports and rec-room, it was a star-studded, invite-only event that catered not only to the male Skywalker-Solo descendants, but to some of the Fel Empire's upper echelons of society.

Despite all the people present, Cade easily spotted one of his cousins Luke Solo—younger brother of Alema Solo—due to the dark side practically pulsing from his dance partner Tyree Zhan. Tyree Zhan, also Tyree Ren, was Alema Solo's closest friend, and fellow member of the Order of Ren. Blonde hair, blue eyes, and a body that'd make even a Zeltron envious. Her every movement was that of a trained killer, and the Sith tattoos on her face only emphasized that fact.

She wasn't the only member of the Order of Ren present in the room. Their trademark black-armored Jedi robes and silver-lined masks were present almost everywhere he turned his head. This made Cade wonder about whether the rumor that the Imperial Knights were sending their more aggressive prospects to the Order of Ren was true. The Dark Council—counterpoint to the Jedi High Council and the organization the Order of Ren was a part of—was well known for their behind-the-scenes bargaining and manipulation of galactic events. The only reason why they never went too far was because the Order of

Ren, as xenophobic and eugenic-minded as they were, actually kept the others in check. A sort of condoning a smaller-evil to negate a bigger-evil situation that many conservative Jedi and their allies called a time-bomb waiting to go off.
As Deliah tugged him towards the dance floor, Cade also saw Luke's brother Ben. A member of the Green Jedi Academy, Ben Solo was dancing with his fellow academy classmate and daughter of the current Diktat of Corellia, Brynn Horn. The two were barely teenagers, yet the Force-bond between them both was undeniable to anyone near them. The fact that they were so in tune with each other and moved like professional dancers only emphasized that fact.
"Come on," Deliah breathed into Cade's ear. "Can't have some kids show us up."
Cade nodded in agreement and spun Deliah around so that his arms were wrapped around her, then spun her back out. As the music pulsated in the background, he did his best to match the natural agile beauty of his lover. They danced for a while, longer than Cade had expected because both Ben and Brynn had spotted them and accepted the non-verbal challenge with glee. It started out close, but Ben and Brynn had the advantage of their Force-connection and Cade and Deliah had to admit defeat.
"Man," Deliah panted as they made their way to the punchbowl. "Those two brats are good. I bet they were cheating and using the Force though."
"It's not cheating if they were using their natural abilities."
"Still cheating."
The lights in the room dimmed and the music ended. A pair of spotlights covered the stage and a holographic image of Aidan Fel appeared. "*Thank you all for coming*!" His voice boomed out through the sound-system. "*I regret that I cannot yet be there in person but I welcome all of you to enjoy the hospitality of my mansion.*"
"I wonder what happened," Deliah muttered to Cade as Aidan personally welcomed a couple of Moffs and high-profile actors and actresses present.
"Assassination attempt," Azlyn Rae answered from behind, causing the two to jump.
"What?" Deliah's head whipped about.
"The other factions of the Dark Council are making their move," Azlyn continued in a low voice. "Every Imperial Knight not protecting Emperor Fel and his wife are here right now."
"Then the party invitation…?"

"Was Aidan's way of trying to protect his family," Azlyn answered. "The Knights from the Order of Ren are here to back up the Imperial Knights. We're expecting the Dark Council to hit this place with some of their best fighters."
"What about the others?" Cade muttered, thinking of his little sister. "Anika is with Lilia Grace at Hapes."
"The Queen Mother is aware of it," Azlyn replied. "Why do you think she's kept her fleet back despite the conflict boiling over in Mandalorian space?"
"You guys trust the Knights from the Order of Ren?" Cade said skeptically. "They don't exactly have a sterling reputation when it comes to backing the right causes."
"Tyree Ren is pretty sure most of her brothers and sisters here will turn on us at some signal," Azlyn chuckled. "That's why Aidan isn't here in person. Though, he really, really, wanted to be here for the fireworks."
"I'm sure," Cade sighed. "So is this a trap for us, or them?"
"Both," Azlyn muttered. "But we're also just as sure that the trap won't be sprung until Aidan *does* arrive. For now, enjoy the party. With several of the actors and actresses here, there'll be an advanced screening of the *Night Herald*: *Agent of Mystery*."
"About time they came up with another Night Herald movie," Deliah brightened, not wanting to talk about an imminent raid of evil-doers looking to ruin the party that was being thrown. She struck a pose while seated and winked playful at Cade. "'The name is Rar, Alema Rar.'"
"If you can believe it, there was actually a lawsuit against the franchise," Azlyn nodded in agreement. "A former producer and co-writer sued the studio that makes the series claiming he had the rights to it. The delay was because it was tied up in the courts."
"I heard about that," Cade said. "The courts allowed him to make a remake of that Night Herald movie that takes place on Dac."
"*Lightning Sphere*," Deliah provided.
"Yeah, that. Speaking of, aren't they going to run out of ideas? Alema Rar never did survive the Legacy Wars. In fact, didn't she die before that whole mess with Abeloth?"
"There's much that she did in that war with the One Sith that wasn't documented," Azlyn shrugged. "But the more outlandish the story, the more it seems to fit with her character."
In the background, Aidan finished addressing the others, and the familiar fast-paced theme music to the Night Herald series began pumping through the sound-system.

"*To wrap up this intro, let me introduce the star cast of the Night Herald series, enjoying a thirty-year run so far. Starring as the Night Herald for the first time, and heiress to the famed Loran acting dynasty, Ser'nali Loran!*"
Dressed in a black leather jacket and pants akin to the costume of the Night Herald, the blue-skinned Twi'lek actress emerged from the side waving at the crowd with a grin. She mimed Alema Rar's trademarked opening-crawl pose to the cheers and whistles of the crowd, blew them all a flirty kiss, then stepped off to the side for her co-stars.
"*And playing Darth Krayt, everyone's go-to villain, Tanner Cowall!*"
A distinguished gentleman with a military-style hair-cut emerged, the smile on his face at odds with the tattoo markings on his face mimicking Darth Krayt's own face-paint. He waved fondly at the crowd, performed a small bow, and then stepped off to join Ser'nali.
"*Of course, my cousin would glare at me if I use her full title, so just welcome Ryna De'win. Fifth generation actress, and taking over the role of relentless Jedi Knight Jysella Horn in Agent of Mystery, let's give her a warm round of applause.*"
More cheers from the crowd, though Ryna's distant relations cheered a bit louder. The movie, after all, was being called her first 'big break' after a bunch of bit-roles, kid's shows, and commercial appearances. Directly descended from a line of prominent actresses that featured names such as Syal Antilles Fel, and Wynssa Fel after her, Ryna's life had been in the spotlight practically since she was born. This was her first foray into the 'grown-up' movies, and great things were expected from her.
Several more members of the cast were introduced, and then a large holo-projector emerged out from behind the curtains.
Aidan Fel gestured to the array of seats. "*Now, if you can all be seated. I present to you, the first ever viewing of Night Herald: Agent of Mystery. Sadly if you like it, you'll have to wait another three months for it to be out in theaters, so make sure you don't miss a thing.*"
"Come on," Deliah pulled Cade over to one of the chairs and waving the movie program at him. "This is supposed to be one of the Night Herald's origin stories, how she first teams up with Jysella Horn after she was betrayed by..."
"Okay, okay, don't spoil anything," Cade chuckled. Despite his humor, he couldn't help but glance at the various members of the Order of Imperial Knights and Order of Ren. Regardless of how the movie actually was, he had a very bad feeling about the rest of the night.
NUE II NUE

The full moon shone above, a Rutian Twi'lek was racing through the woods. Her lithe figure was illuminated by the silvery glow as she leaped and sprinted through the branches and bushes in her way. A few steps behind her, several more shadows could be seen, their robes fluttering in the breeze as they pursued their target with relentless efficiency. A blade of green lit up from one of the pursuers and was hurled through the air.
The Twi'lek performed a spinning leap out of the way, the blade narrowly missing the very end of her lekku. The throw delayed her enough that two others caught up with her. There was a flash as an orange-red yorik-coral saber blade flared into existence, deftly parrying the charging lunges of the green and blue blades thrust at her. The Twi'lek held out a hand and used a blast of Force-energy to send the two Jedi tumbling backwards, before resuming her run through the forest.
Eventually, though, she ran out of room, coming to a skidding stop at the edge of a cliff-face on the distant world. Her quick breaths were visible in the chilly night air, a small, resigned smile flickering across her face as she turned to face those chasing her. She held her lightsabers out at her sides, her green eyes evaluating the others as they formed a semi-circle in front of her, ensuring there was no way out.
"It's over Alema," a Jedi Knight said aloud, green saber held at the ready. "We know you've fallen to the dark side. The bodies back in the grove prove it."
"Well, boys. It looks like you've got me."
"Then you'll come peacefully? We don't want to fight you."
"So…you're waving your lightsabers at me for what? Fun?"
"You drew on us first," reminded the Jedi.
"Your friends tried to kill me."
"You've fallen to the dark side," the Jedi said a bit impatiently. "But I can see that talking with you is pointless."
"Five on one is hardly the fair, Jedi thing to do." Alema smiled faintly. Above, a cloud formation drifted in front of the moon, momentarily making her illuminated solely by the light of her blades. "But I'm always up for a challenge."
"You really have fallen if you can't see what you've become."
"Look in the mirror," Alema retorted, bringing her sabers up. "If you don't fit the perfect image the Jedi Order wants you to conform to, you've fallen. Is attacking me what the great masters really want?"
"If you don't surrender, you leave us no choice. If we let you go, you will go on to harm many. We can't have that."

"And you can't, can you?" Alema glanced over her shoulder at the inky blackness of the chasm behind her. She glanced towards the Jedi inching towards her and gave the leader a wink. She deactivated her lightsabers and slid her feet back a few centimeters.
"There's nowhere left to go," the Jedi Knight shook his head.
"Really?" Alema chuckled, clipping her sabers back to her belt. "The way I see it, if you think I've fallen, there really is only one way to go. Down."
With an arcing back-flip, she propelled herself off the edge of the cliff. The Jedi tried to use the Force to catch her, but she thrust out both hands and knocked them to the ground. By the time the Jedi recovered, the dark chasm below had completely swallowed her.
"Good riddance," muttered one of the Jedi, shaking his head.
"What a waste," another clipped his own lightsaber to his belt.
The leader gestured to the others. "Let's return and let the council know. Jedi Knight Alema Rar is truly dead."

NUE II NUE

The movie's theme-song, *The Night is Still Young,* played its haunting melody. The silhouettes of Twi'lek dancers moved to its mournful, foreboding tune with sensual grace. Superimposed over their bodies were a montage of scenes from the previous movies, a hint of things still to come in the life of the movie's heroine.

Youuuu don't know who to turn to
Masked in the darkness, standing in the light
All alone, but still you fight.
Shadows close in
There's nowhere to run, nowhere to hide,
You cannot escape, you must pick a side.
The dawn seems so far away,
And still, you stay
Because the night is still young.

Cade Skywalker found his head bobbing to the hypnotic-like music. And when the song slowly came to an end, the last note stretching out as the movie cut away to the capital planet of Denon, six years after the end of the Yuuzhan Vong War.

NUE II NUE

A figure in Jedi robes, his face hidden in the shadow of the comm-room, sat at a table that mimicked one on the distant world of Korriban. Occupying the other seats were holographic representations of the other mal-intentioned characters of the organization he was a part of. There was one figure that stood out among all the others. Sitting on a throne separate from the table, and being projected by a dedicated

holo-panel was the unmistakable features of Darth Krayt. His hand was absently petting an albino nexu-kitten in his lap as he stared out at those gathered through his mask.
"*This meeting of the Organization to Neutralize Enemies of Sith Ideology with Terror and Hate has come to order,"* Darth Krayt said in an even, yet icy tone. "*Your reports*."
"*Darth Krayt,*" one of the holographic figures spoke up. "*The Maw Irregular Fleet continues to grow. Our operatives were especially successful in securing the five Yuuzhan Vong War-era worships the Galactic Alliance had just decommissioned.*"
"*Excellent Admiral Daala. Darth Kyrissa and Darth Brood?*"
"*We continue to experiment with the Yuuzhan Vong techniques Vongerella has so graciously provided to enhance our pets even further."*
"Very good, very good. Before we continue, though there is a small matter that needs to be addressed. Someone thought that because I am confined to Korriban that their actions would go unnoticed. But they evidently forgot that my Night Herald sees all. Darth Brutalis, you've disappointed me."
"In…what manner, my Lord?" one of the other seated figures said nervously.
"Did you not think I would discover your extortion and money-laundering schemes? That your greed for wealth nearly exposed us before we were ready?"
"My Lord, I would nev…" Lord Brutalis, a man who looked more like an accountant than a Sith Lord, suddenly reached for his neck, gasping for air. "*I didn't…didn't think…*"
"*You thought to steal from the ONE SITH? Obviously you didn't think,"* Darth Krayt said in an almost bored tone. With a strangled dying rasp, Lord Brutalis fell out of his chair and hit the ground, dead. Darth Krayt turned his attention to another member at the table. *"Darth Enigmatus, your report from Denon?*"
"Yes, Darth Krayt," the shadowy figure in Jedi robes replied without missing a beat. "My cover remains sound. My operatives are spread out throughout this corrupt government with more growing by the day. The launch is proceeding as planned. When the sun rises once more, a blast that will be blamed on disgruntled spice-miners and refugees will make waves throughout Denon, and their government will be forever weakened."
"*Very well, continue with your operations. Do not let anyone get in the way.*"
NUE II NUE

The Senate Building was as busy as ever as the latest round of bad news made its way through the grapevine. Another supply shipment for a restoration project on some distant world had been hijacked, with several billion credits in equipment and resources gone in addition to the fighter-escort that had been protecting the transports. But one group of individuals was marching through the gilded halls with a purpose greater than benign politicking.

"Jedi Knight Horn, this is a surprise," the Corellian Senator said, a datapad frozen in his hand as Jedi Knight Jysella Horn entered his office. His décor could be described as golden chic, with mirrored walls bedecked with gold-plated murals and a matching mirror-plated, gold desk.

"I wish it were under better circumstances, senator," Jysella didn't return the man's smile as four members of CorSec entered the room behind her. "You're under arrest for corruption, treason, and murder."

"Jedi Knight Horn, I don't follow." The senator said, a mask of confusion on his face.

"Did you really think we wouldn't find the bank accounts you hid on five other worlds? Or the bribes you took from the pirates to sell out the last supply convoy Corellia sent out?"

"Bank accounts?"

"Don't try to play innocent, senator. We have enough proof to lock you up for the rest of your life."

"Lock *me* up?" The senator stood, pushing away his plush, gold-backed chair, anger turning his congenial face ugly. "I've dedicated forty years of my life to Corellia and you want to lock *me* up? I don't think so."

The senator hit a button under his desk and automated turrets rose up from the ground and dropped down from the ceiling. The turrets opened fire a split-second later, taking out the four guards with Jysella and forcing her back towards the doorway. Another button and the panel of windows behind him blew out and a speeder zoomed up in front of the gap.

"Damn it!" Jysella swore, her yellow saber blocking the barrage of blasterbolts.

"Some Jedi you are," the senator gloated from the cockpit, before gunning the engines and zooming off.

Jysella broke away from the turrets and sprinted through the Senate Building, reaching the motor-pool in record time. She slid over the side of her own speeder and started it up with practiced ease, the Force letting her reacquire the trail of her quarry after a few seconds of weaving through traffic.

"You just don't give up, do you!" The senator yelled in disbelief as Jysella slammed her speeder into the side of his. He braked hard and slid behind Jysella's speeder. His speeder's front lights dropped down to reveal twin laser cannons that shrieked loudly.
Jysella veered hard to the right to avoid being blasted out of the sky, and winced as the laser barrage downed several other speeders instead. The senator stayed on her tail, but the Force was guiding her movements and she managed to use a passing freighter to loop back to his side.
"Why don't you just die!"
"All that anger isn't good for you. You can always turn off your speeder and surrender," Jysella retorted.
The senator scowled, hit a button on his speeder, and the back opened up and released a handful of attack drones.
"Well, at least I know where some of those credits went!" Jysella cursed. The back of her speeder was stitched with lasers and rapidly disintegrating. She unbuckled her safety harness and leaped through the air as her speeder vanished in a ball of fire. She landed on the back of the senator's speeder, hanging on for dear life as he swerved the vehicle in an attempt to lose her.
She retaliated by pressing a hand to the back repulsors and concentrating. A moment later, the repulsor died completely, sending the both of them plummeting towards a nearby walkway. The crash was jarring, throwing the both of them clear from the speeder and sending them tumbling across the ground.
Unfortunately for Jysella, the senator was the first to recover. As she opened her eyes, she saw the barrel of a gold-plated blaster aimed right at her forehead. The senator, bleeding, bruised, but very much alive, smirked. "Goodbye, Jedi Horn."
Jysella couldn't summon any focus to defend herself, and closed her eyes, expecting to rejoin the Force. The sound of a lightsaber blade activating had her eyes spring open, and the sight had her gasping in shock.
A silver lightsaber blade was shining out from the senator's chest. The surprised senator looked over his shoulder and gasped.
"You!"
"Me," Alema Rar replied with a smile. She pulled her blade out and then decapitated the man.
"You!" Jysella breathed out, her vision swimming.
Alema tilted her head. "Me?"
"Alema?" Jysella managed as the world began to darken.

"Me," Alema nodded with a small grin. "Sleep now, you took a nasty bonk to the head."
NUE
Jysella woke with a start, gasping as the memory of the chase and crash flooded through her.
"Easy, don't want to open up those wounds," Alema drawled, sitting by the window sill and gazing out at the evening commute. The sun a few hours above the horizon.
"What…where am I?" Jysella rasped.
"My crashpad," Alema got up and walked to a refrigeration unit. "Want anything to drink?"
"Force…Alema…it's been almost eight years since I last saw you," Jysella breathed out, ignoring the question. "You look…"
"Like more normal cheerful self?" Alema asked, pulling out frosted bottle and taking a swig from it.
"Horrible," Jysella said. "Those tattoos you have aren't flattering at all."
"Really?" Alema glanced over towards a mirror. "I thought they were very slimming."
"Any slimmer and you'd be a skeleton," Jysella retorted, swinging her legs out of the bed. "Force, just look at you. You look like death warmed over."
"Nice to see you too," Alema said wryly. She put the drink back and walked back over towards Jysella.
"Sorry, but you know what I mean."
"Yeah," Alema held out a tattooed arm. "Uniform for my new job, unfortunately."
"New job?" Jysella blinked, then shook her head. "Never mind that, what are you doing here and where the blazes have you been!? Eight years without even a message or note letting me know you're okay? You know how worried I was when you first disappeared? They said you killed over ten Jedi! There's a fracken bounty on your head that beats out the one Jabba put on Han Solo several times over. And then you just show up like this!"
"I saved your life," Alema pointed out with a small pout. "Doesn't that count for something?"
"Alema."
"Look, I have no idea where they got the notion I killed ten Jedi. I only killed two, and they weren't really good Jedi in the first place. The other bodies, they were already there when I got to the clearing. Next thing I know, I have a Jedi hit-squad chasing me down. But really. Ten? I'm good, but I'm not *that* good."

"Then why didn't you turn yourself in, explain it to Master Skywalker?" Jysella frowned.
"It was in the middle of the Yuuzhan Vong War. I wouldn't have been the first Jedi to fall in war time. Besides, I had a feeling I wasn't going to live long enough to experience one of his acts of mercy."
"And now you're here?"
"Related to why I left in the first place," Alema said, her expression clouding. "The guy who set me up on Kalee, I learned that he's actually a top operative to a dark Jedi faction plotting to take over the galaxy. Recently discovered that the guy was on Denon, in the Jedi Temple in fact, but I don't know any other details. The senator you ran into was one of the guy's agents. Unfortunately, you confronted him before he could lead me back to his boss."
"Wait, wait, wait. Slow down a tick. What dark Jedi faction plotting to take over the galaxy…and besides, which dark Jedi faction *doesn't* want to take over the galaxy? That's like saying a 'drunken Corellian spacer'."
"You're right, kind of redundant," Alema smiled sheepishly. "These guys, they're called the One Sith. I kind of joined up when I learned about them. You know, to scout them out."
"You *joined* the Sith?"
"One Sith. Kind of, technically, yeah," Alema grimaced at the tone of Jysella's voice. "But for a good cause. You think the galaxy is in a miserable place right now? When the government gets its act together and solves that sky-rocketing crime problem, the One Sith are going to march right out of the shadows and boom…"
"We have to tell someone!"
"Who?" Alema folded her arms in front of her. "I told you the One Sith have operatives inside the government. Word gets back to them that the GA know about them and they'll just go so far underground we'll all be old or dead by the time they resurface. I joined to minimize the damage these One Sith can do. Starting with their man on the inside who framed me eight years ago. Only thing is, I can't outright go against him because I'm technically on his side."
"Does he know you're here?"
"No," Alema shook her head. "I'm fortunate Denon is a big place and I can disappear real fast. But because I don't want him to start worrying, I have to move real carefully. Imagine my surprise when you tried to take down his agent and had that fun chase through traffic. I'm hoping Mr. Mysterious will write his agent off as being too sloppy. But it also means I have to keep his next few agents alive or he might suspect

something. One minion being offed might be acceptable, but if his people start dropping left and right..."
"You want my help," Jysella commented neutrally.
Alema grimaced and looked back out the window. "Yeah."
"And I can't tell anyone that I'm actually hunting a Sith operative embedded in the Jedi Order?"
"Not sure he's a Jedi, but it'll fit the profile. If he is a Jedi, though, he's even more dangerous because he's kept himself hidden from the dozens of mind-readers he's around daily."
"And you're trying to take him on without tipping your hand or getting arrested. Even though the people who will do the arresting are the ones you're actually trying to save?"
"Sound fun yet?" Alema smiled, but this time Jysella could easily see the emotions the Twi'lek was keeping at bay.
"Why?" Jysella asked softly.
"Huh?"
"Why? Why do this, put yourself through…that," she gestured to the lightning scars running along one side of Alema's exposed figure. "Why the heck did you cut yourself off from people who love you for eight years and trade that in for people who'd stab you in the back! All you had to do was ask and I would have helped, my brother would have helped. Heck my mom and dad too!"
Alema turned back towards the traffic. "And I would have ruined your family too. Everyone who's ever loved me, supported me, they end up dead in one way or another. My master, my sister, even Anakin Solo. I heard that when he stuck his neck out for me, he ended up getting it cut off, that he's been labeled as a supporter of the dark side because of it. I couldn't do that to your family, Jysella. After everything they gave me, it wouldn't have been right. As for why I'm doing this…look out there, Jysella. How many people do you think live in this part of Denon alone? When night falls, look up into the sky. At each of those stars. Think about all those people there. You're just one person. *I'm* just one person. One person in a city of millions, on a planet of billions, in a system of tens of billions, in a sector of hundreds of billions. All in a single galaxy of trillions of living beings. Compared to that, what is my life?
I don't care if people curse my name, if they think me the worst thing to appear on the HoloNet since those Admiral Ackbar cereal commercials. I don't care if they hunt me to the ends of the galaxy, if they lecture the next generation of Jedi about the dangers that led to my fall. I don't care because at least they all still have the choice to do it. The free will to waste their time following what they believe in. To

live their mundane lives the way they want to. As much as the Jedi Order preaches about…well…order, the galaxy exists in a chaos that will never be tamed. And I like it like that. If the Sith had their way, they'd plant their gardens in neat, orderly rows. Have extermination camps for anyone that didn't fit their image of what a 'proper' living being should be. And all that chaos, it'd be bottled up, a galaxy-wide explosion waiting to blow. Because you can't put a leash on chaos without being consumed by it. And when the One Sith try to do just that…you and everyone else I'm fighting for will be dead or mockeries of who you once were."

The sun sank behind a wall of high-rises, the sky still a dusky color, yet growing darker by the second.

"So that's why, Jysella," Alema whispered softly, a hand gripping the windowsill. "That's why I fight no matter how hopeless or impossible things are. After all, the only thing I have left to lose is the entire galaxy."

"You're crazy." Jysella breathed out.

"I know," Alema laughed a broken laugh. "But only crazy can get the job done. I haven't gotten myself killed yet, so I must be doing something right."

"Do you have a plan?"

"This mean you're going to help?" Alema cast a glance over her shoulder.

"Of course," Jysella said, arching and eyebrow. "But you knew I would anyways, otherwise you wouldn't have brought me here."

"You could have always said 'no'."

"But I'm not," Jysella shrugged. "So, what's your plan to take down a dark Jedi operative operating under the noses of the Jedi Council and Galactic Alliance government without giving yourself away or getting us killed?"

Alema's smile became genuine as her yellow eyes reverted to their natural green for a split second. "Plan, who needs a plan?"

Jysella sighed. "That's what I thought."

NUE III NUE

"Of course the senator had to have a mountain estate on a planet that's nearly completely covered with city," Jysella muttered as their speeder approached one of the few undeveloped mountains on Denon. Most undeveloped mountains were owned by one corporation or another, even the government, and specialized in mining, construction, botanical, or other various business endeavors that worked better without the several million people crammed around the site.

Said estate had been discovered after combing through the records the senator had left behind. Technically the estate was owned by a shell-company, owned by another shell-company that was a derivative of a contractor owned in the name of one of the senator's distant relations. Fortunately, after getting away with his embezzlement for several years, the senator had gotten sloppy and Jysella had spotted the expenses and narrowed down the location.

"What would *you* do with a hundred-million embezzled credits?" Alema asked. Though the sun had only just set, the mountain estate was illuminated with a shining array of lights, visible even from the distance they were at.

"Not waste it on a house in the middle of nowhere," Jysella snorted. She adjusted the sleeve of her form-fitting black jumpsuit. Foregoing the usual Jedi robes that kind of stood out no matter how stealthy one was, the black jumpsuit ensured mobility and added camouflage. It also had more pockets than the Jedi robes did, enabling Jysella to carry more equipment. "What would you spend that money on?"

"Entertainment of course," Alema grinned lasciviously, leaving little doubt as to what type of entertainment she was referring to.

"All hundred-million credits?" Jysella blinked.

"Maybe half of it," Alema said. "The other half I'd spend on my own personal star-yacht. Much more fun zooming around the galaxy than anchoring yourself to the same boring planet day in and out."

"That's a lot of entertainment," Jysella deadpanned.

"Yeah, well…" Alema trailed off. The danger in the Force spiked. Bright flashes of light from the direction of the estate flared to life for a fraction of a second, followed by a sonic-boom as sound-barrier-breaking projectiles streamed towards them.

Jysella cursed and jammed the steering column into a sharp climb. The maneuver evaded the first missile, but the second exploded just off to the side of their speeder, peppering it with fragments. Several of the fragments tore through the engine housing, and the sharp climb became a dive.

"Can you *not* be in a vehicle that crashes?" Alema gritted out as the speeder picked up speed in its race towards the mountain-side.

"It's not my fault! There was nothing in the files that said the senator had anti-air defenses at his estate!" Jysella shouted back over the rushing wind and manic beeping of the speeder's console. "Besides, who installs anti-air defenses at a summer retreat?"

"Corrupt Corellian senators apparently," Alema clenched her jaw as the forested mountain-side grew even closer. "This is going to hurt."

The speeder crashed through the upper branches of towering evergreen trees, branches snapping as they tried to stop the hurling mass of rapidly disintegrating metal. The speeder pinwheeled off of a thicker tree, its momentum bouncing it off an adjacent tree before it plummeted to the forest floor. There it crashed to the rocky ground in an anti-climatic thud, sparks and smoke coming from the wrecked vehicle.

Coughing, Jysella hoisted herself out of her seat, the safety-harness doing its job of both keeping her alive and giving her a very painful safety-harness shaped bruise across her front. Alema similarly extracted herself, groaning as she did.

"You alive?" Alema muttered, closing her eyes to ward off the spinning.

"Yeah, just a little shaken," Jysella answered back, surprising herself at how little the dramatic crash had stirred her. She should be happy that they survived, but then, it was like a part of her had expected the pyrotechnics after teaming up with Alema once again.

Jysella heard the thrup-thrup-thrup of the propellers of an atmospheric glider and looked up in time to see someone leap out of the glider and meteor straight down towards her. She rolled to the side to avoid the blade of a vibrosword. The assailant, a woman, slashed at Jysella again.

What little wind was knocked out of Jysella's lungs again as the other woman leaped and landed on top of her, pinning her to the ground.

"The pleasure of killing a Jedi is all mine," the woman grinned manically.

"A little help," Jysella gritted out, trying to keep the humming blade away from her neck. The blade got closer and closer. Without other Jedi's affinity for telekinesis, Jysella couldn't throw her attacker away. Fortunately for her, Alema decided that Jysella's death wasn't something that would amuse her.

With a gesture from the blue-skinned Twi'lek, Jysella's attacker was sent flying through the air and directly into the propellers of the atmospheric hopper. A miniature fireball detonated in the air upon impact, and the stricken vehicle spiraled away out of control.

"Took you long enough," Jysella grumbled, dusting her clothes off.

"I was on top of things," Alema protested, helping Jysella to her feet. "I was trying to calculate the angle needed to throw Ms. Stabby-Kill-Go-Boom into the hopper."

"Well, between our crash-landing and the hopper blowing up, it's a good chance whoever is left in that mansion knows we're coming."

"Oh goody, that means we can stop sneaking and just blast whoever gets in our way," Alema unholstered a blaster at her side and twirled it expertly.
Jysella reached over and plucked the blaster out of Alema's hands. "The guards are more likely just hired help who picked the wrong employer. I may have agreed to help you but I'm still a Jedi."
"You're still boring then," Alema sighed, reaching back into their crash speeder to recover a few supplies.
"And you're still insane," Jysella retorted, rolling her eyes.
"Of course, the best way to live," Alema said, her voice muffled. She tossed a pair of electrobinoculars over her shoulder. "Can we see the estate from here?"
Jysella arched an eyebrow. "We're in the middle of a forest."
"That's a no?"
"Give me a sec," Jysella grabbed onto a nearby towering tree and climbed up. After several long minutes, she reached the top.
"Anything?"
"Just got to the top!"
"All that paper work has gotten you out of shape."
"Do you want to climb up here after crash-landing and nearly getting the life squeezed out of you?" Jysella shouted back down. She held up the electrobinoculars and trained them on the estate further up the mountain. "Damn, not good. That thing's like a fortress. Walls on three sides, mountain on the other. Guards, lot of droids, mounted turrets. We're going to be shredded if we try to attack that place."
"Have you tried thinking positive?"
"I swear you've gotten even more annoying since you joined up with the Sith."
"In the job description. We also have to learn how to spout cliché lines and look brooding without being too sulking."
"Wait, I see a way in," Jysella did her best not to smile. She might not want to admit it out loud, but she did miss Alema…somewhat. "Looks like there's a mag-rail that runs along the side of the mountain. I can't tell where it's coming from, but it definitely goes through a containment field in the wall."
"If we got on the mag-train, can you not crash it?" Alema asked lightly.
"No promises, Rar," Jysella sighed, summoning every ounce of patience. She landed back on the ground and glared at Alema. "Really, you can be like a little kid sometimes."
"Guilty," Alema shrugged. Her voice became softer despite the humor she tried to inject into her words. "Would you rather I be all Sithy? You

know…grrrr! Fail me and I'll kill you in ways that are probably overkill and unnecessary?"
Jysella glanced side-long at her companion. "Just…you're not really like the Alema I remember. The one who taught me how to dance and enjoy life."
Alema glanced up at the sky and sighed almost mournfully. The light pollution from the planet-wide city meaning it was still a glowing yellow despite the late hour. "That Alema died a long time ago, Sella. Had to die or I wouldn't be here today."
"In some ways, I guess I understand…but the way you are now…it's like a caricature of the Alema I knew."
"Sometimes that's definitely what I feel like," Alema answered seriously. "A stranger in my own skin. The things I've had to do to survive until now…let's just say you probably would have skewered me on the spot if you knew."
"That bad?"
"Whatever you were thinking and worse," Alema shrugged. "When you are in as deep as I am, sometimes you forget to surface and catch your breath. Especially if you know that every time you surface the people you're fighting for will try to kill you just as much as the ones you're betraying. I've been living a lie for so long, I'm actually not sure which of my selves is the true one. In the end though, I guess it doesn't matter. I have a job to do, and I'll do it as both Alema Rar, unofficial Jedi secret agent, and Alema Rar, the fallen."
*** NUE***
Cade felt the subtle shift in the Force and glanced over to Knight of Ren Tyree Zhan. By being 'neutral' when it came to the Force, politics, and other galaxy-driving factions, Cade and Deliah actually found themselves more often than not tied up in the events stirred up by those factions. They were somehow entrusted with a great many secrets, among them were information many would kill for.
As Alema Rar spoke her heartfelt lines, Cade couldn't help but feel sorry for Tyree. She was deeply in love with Luke Solo, but at the same time was equally devoted to the Order of Ren. The organization had raised her since she was just a few weeks old, was everything to her. They also had very strict rules about relationships with Jedi. One could be had, but only as a means to an end. If it got out that a knight from the Order of Ren had fallen in love with a Jedi and was acting on those feelings, the punishment was a swift death. The Jedi Order was well aware of this rule and as a rule of their own, tended to stay away from the knights of the Order of Ren.

Yet, Tyree disagreed with the pacifistic tendencies of the Jedi Order and had no desire to 'defect.' She had never acted on her feelings, but at the same time, it was her feelings for Luke that more or less made her the Jedi Order's 'inside' agent in the Order of Ren. While Alema Solo drew all the suspicion, Tyree acted with impunity. And because Tyree never entered Galactic Alliance controlled space, no one was the wiser. But as her contact, the crew of the *Mynock* was more than aware of how torn she was when it came to her feelings and duty. Even now, Tyree was standing on the opposite side of the room as Luke, her emotional shields at an all-time high and gaze locked on the holoscreen. She had made her choice, chosen the Order of Ren over her own feelings. Or tried to in any case. Cade knew realistically that it'd only be a matter of time before the lies ate her up on the inside. He could only hope that she'd have a 'Jysella Horn' at her side when things came to a head.

NUE III NUE

It seemed like a good idea at the time, changing the current in the mag-rail to slow the speeding train down just enough to land safely on top of it. Only, what Alema and Jysella hadn't known then was that the current tram was actually a troop-transport and that all five of its cars were full of soldiers going to the estate to reinforce the forces there. If one looked at the train, one might think a circus act was taking place.

"Enjoying yourself, Rar?" Jysella said wryly, performing a split as a henchman with a metal claw for a hand made a grab at her. She severed the hand and kicked the stunned henchman off the train where he disappeared with a cry.

"Bunches!" Alema called back, her eyes tracking a set of vibroknife-wielding twins. One of them hurled a knife and she used the Force to redirect it into the other. She then sent a fallen blaster-rifle spinning into the back of the head of the startled knife-thrower and shoved him off the train.

"Great! Let's hope they don't decide to blow up the train with us on it!" Jysella bantered.

"Please don't give them any ideas."

Jysella refocused her attention on a particularly tall, Nikto henchman bearing down on her. He sneered at her smaller figure, a hammer-like weapon held at the ready. Jysella glanced on the other side of the henchman and smiled faintly. Maybe too much of Alema was a bad thing. "By the way, how tall are you?"

The henchman grinned a cocky smirk. "Two-point zero-five meters, tiny."

"Great, thanks," Jysella dropped to a seated position to the confusion of the henchman. A low-hanging, Kashyyyk-sized branch crept up on the tall man and promptly leveled him from behind, shattering in a hail of splinters.

The estate and its fortress like walls came into view as the train rounded the bend. The fight still going on in full swing as mercenary henchman after mercenary henchman clambered out of the train. The guards atop the estate wall saw what was going on and promptly began to fire at the train as well.

Jysella, who was wrestling for control of her lightsaber with another henchman, was inadvertently aided by the barrage when a sniper-shot picked off her assailant and sent him flying off the train. The barrage didn't end though, and she quickly rolled off the side of the train and acrobatically flipped herself through a shattered window. She was almost immediately greeted by a swinging vibrosword blade. Jysella jerked to the side to follow another fast swing, then saw that the wild slices had severed the power-cables in the cabin. She abruptly grabbed one of the live wires just as the vibrosword-wielding henchmen swung at her again. Gripping the wrists holding onto the blade, Jysella proceeded to give the henchman her most electrifying performance yet.

Meanwhile, with the barrage from the estate intensifying Alema followed Jysella into the mag-rail. Like Jysella though, she was promptly greeted, then tackled by another large henchman. Struggling to break the man's stranglehold, Alema gritted her teeth. "What'd the good senator do, hire you guys by the batch-load?"

She stopped reaching for her neck and instead raked the man's eyes, causing him to release his grip, but little else. In the confined space of the train car, Alema had little room to maneuver. She backtracked fast, laying out several other henchman who tried to get in the way. When she reached the back of the train, she quickly looked around for anything she could use, a plan forming in her mind. Hastily, she used her lightsaber to cut away the side panel. The outside rushed by quickly, the deafening sound of blaster-fire letting her know that they were almost at their destination. Large Henchman Number Two barged into the train car and made a move to throw her out the hole she had made. She nimbly flipped herself around and then grabbed the coil of tow-cable that had been at the back of the train-car. She looped it around the henchman's neck and clipped it to a heavy crate right next to the open hole. The henchman snarled as he struggled to free himself, and Alema used the Force to send the crate flying out into the mountain-side. The henchman realized at the last second that he was

still connected to the crate and let out a yell, shortly before he was yanked off the train.
All too quickly, the sound of fighting had stopped.
"Still alive, Jysella?" Alema called out lazily, sauntering back through the train, her leather jacket a complete mess. She felt the other woman's presence in the Force and wasn't worried at all.
"Somehow," Jysella emerged from a room. The finely manicured henchman she had tangled with—literally as she apparently had strangled him with his own garrote—still on the ground.
The train screeched to a halt.
"Well, I think this is our stop," Jysella breathed out, catching her breath.
"End of the line," Alema said with a smile, hitting the door panel. Her smile disappeared at the sight of several dozen blaster-rifles and rocket-launchers aimed in their direction. "I didn't mean it that way."
Jysella raised her hands. "On the bright side, if they wanted us dead, they'd have shot us already."
Alema clipped her saber back to her belt and shrugged. "True."
"Hands up!" one of the helmeted henchman barked.
Alema raised her hands as well. "Happy?"
The helmeted henchman glanced to his underlings. "Take them away. The boss is going to want to hear about this."

NUE IV NUE

"I don't believe it!" Cade heard Azlyn curse under her breath. He looked up, and immediately understood her out of character outburst. Striding through one of the side doors was the male heir to the Fel Empire, Aidan Fel.
As others took note of his arrival, the mood in the room seemed to change considerably—an easy-going atmosphere filled with movie-goers, to a ticking time-bomb in a matter of seconds. Aidan either didn't notice or didn't care, smiling and tilting his head politely at those who acknowledged him.
"He's coming this way," Deliah breathed out. "Why does he have to do that? Doesn't he know he has a giant target on his head and that sitting next to us gets us involved too?"
Cade looked over his shoulder and raised an eyebrow at Azlyn. "I thought he wasn't supposed to be here."
"You're related to his Highness," Azlyn hissed. "Has anyone ever been able to stop *you* from doing something if you've set your mind to it?"
"Point," Cade allowed. "But Deliah's right. Does he really have to sit here?"
"You're his favorite cousin."

"He's no longer mine," Cade muttered.
"Cade, Deliah," Aidan greeted with an imperious tilt of his head.
"Prince Fel," Cade returned, well aware of the many eyes that had stopped watching the movie and was now watching them.
"Glad you could make it," Aidan took a seat in the empty chair next to them.
"Your Highness, should you really be here?" Azlyn said through gritted teeth.
"Lighten up, Knight Captain," Aidan said over his shoulder with a small smile. "I'd rather get this over with than drag it out all night. Besides, do you really think they'll attack before the movie is over?"
"You are hopelessly optimistic, Your Highness," Azlyn grumbled. "Don't you wonder why everyone prefers guarding your sister?"
"She's boringly safe?"
"She actually listens to her guards," Azlyn corrected darkly.
"Hush now, Knight Captain, that's an order. This movie's more fun to watch in company anyways."
Azlyn glowered but stayed silent.
Knowing there really was nothing to be done, Cade let out a sigh of resignation and went back to watching the movie. In the time that had passed, the two heroines had been stunned and woke to find themselves in a deadly situation.

NUE IV NUE

"You can watch your friend return to the Senate Building with a message from us," a tall, muscular, blond henchman said to a bound Alema. In the background, Jysella Horn was strapped to a missile being aimed out of an observatory-like slot in the roof. What could have been the henchman's muscle-bound, blond cousin was putting the finishing touches on the ropes holding Jysella in place.
Alema, strapped to a metal table and with a neural-disruption collar around her neck, kept her face bored even as her mind raced to find a way out of their current situation. The room was filled with henchmen going about their business, most prepping the rocket for launch.
"Okay, thanks for the front-row seat."
"Not helping!" Jysella called out from where she was.
"I'm in a bit of a bind here!" Alema shouted back.
"Silence!" The henchman menacing Alema growled.
"Oh, sorry. How about… 'No! Please don't kill her! I'll tell you everything I know!'" Alema tried.
"You've never begged for a life before, have you?" Jysella said flatly.
"Wasn't desperate enough?" Alema asked.
"Rar!"

"Okay! Okay! But don't you want these guys' boss to show up?"
"I'm strapped to a rocket that can take off at the push of a button! More urgency please!" Jysella earned a punch to her midsection '*Silence!*'.
"Now, Ms. Rar," Blond Henchman One said with a victorious grin. "Once we vaporize your friend, our master will return and you'll learn the penalty for betraying the One Sith."
"I already know it. Horrible, painful, death," Alema quipped. "So we can definitely skip that lesson. Although I won't say 'no' to meeting your immediate boss."
Blond Henchman One scowled and then whirled towards the technicians working on an array of computers. "Start launch countdown!"
An automated voice announced a ten-second countdown a moment later.
"Ten…Nine…"
"Alema!"
Alema closed her eyes and managed to summon enough concentration to briefly undo the security latch to the rocket. The entire rocket came sliding down the rail and onto Blond Henchman Two's foot, trapping him in place. At the same time, the jarring action shook Jysella free and she dropped to the ground, coming up in a rolling combat pose.
"Five…Four…" The rocket ignition ignited, burning away Blond Henchman Two in a blaze of fire.
In the meantime, Jysella was a whirl of action, snatching a blaster pistol from a startled guard and firing on anything blow-up-able and blast-able. She hit a tank of liquid nitrogen, and the freezing gas erupted outwards and engulfed one of the technicians desperately trying to keep the launch on schedule. Another shot hit an array of computers attached to the ceiling, and it came crashing down onto another henchman. Chaos filled the room, the rocket blasting off into the Denon sky.
"The rocket!" Alema yelled.
"Busy!" Jysella shouted, barred from the array of control panels by an Ubese henchman in a fancy electrified armored suit. The purple energy crackled in the air as he swiped at Jysella several times, forcing her back. He lunged again, and Jysella grabbed his wrist. He smirked and a several megavolts of electricity surged through his armor. But then it was Jysella's turn to smirk. She absorbed the energy and promptly sent it right back into him. The armored henchman let out a gargled yell as his body convulsed and thrashed about in her grip, the suit creating a feedback circuit that rapidly built up. It reached critical in a matter of

seconds, the device's powercell blowing out and dropping the henchman to the ground.
She didn't have time to catch her breath though as another henchman, this time armed with a saw-blade attached to a retractable tow-cable, hurled his bladed weapon at her. A third henchman, armed with a vibro-switchblade, held his weapon out in the air as he waited for an opening. Jysella narrowly avoided the spinning buzz-saw, then spun again as the second henchman tried to skewer her with the switchblade. The duo attacked again, this time nicking Jysella with both their attack runs.
"I don't have time for this," Jysella yelled, eyes darting back and forth between her assailants. When the switchblade henchman attacked again, Jysella grabbed his wrist, head-butted him, and then sent his stunned form flying down a garbage chute. Her second assailant sent his weapon spinning towards her, and Jysella hit the button that would activate the trash-compactor as she dodged the attack. Before the sawblade returned to the henchman, Jysella hurled a piece of debris at the man. The debris distracted the man long enough that he missed the catch and his own saw-blade flew back and right into him. With both dispatched, Jysella was finally able to breathe a sigh of relief. Then, quickly reminded that she didn't have much time to stop the rocket, she glanced towards the bank of computers. A short bridge over a pool of frixan separated her platform from the bank of computers. And on that bridge was on last opponent.
While Jysella had been fighting, however, Blonde Henchman One realized that Alema was still strapped to the metal table. He activated a cutting laser and began to aim the device at the helpless Twi'lek. Alema gritted her teeth and tried to force her mind to concentrate on the beam of death that aimed to slice her in two.
"It's time to die, Alema Rar," he crowed.
"Jysella!" Alema cried out.
"What do you want me to do? Stop the rocket or save you!" Jysella yelled back in frustration, now squaring off against a large Blond Henchman Three on a small bridge over a pit of ravenous frixan. She punched the henchman's mid-section several times, but it didn't seem to do anything. The henchman grabbed Jysella by the cloth of her shirt and hurled her across the bridge.
"Me of course!" Alema yelled back, sweat pouring down her face as her limited connection to the Force fought with Blond Henchman One's grip on the cutting laser.
"I'll put it on my things to do list!" Jysella let out a rush of air as she was slammed against a wall and thrown across the room again.

With a small 'yes!' of victory, Alema managed to wrench Blond Henchman One's arm just enough for the cutting laser to slice through her wrist bindings. She quickly ripped off the neural collar and freed herself, rolling to the floor. Blond Henchman One promptly shoulder-speared her, driving them both through a set of windows and out onto a balcony. There, the two exchanged blows, though Alema—being the smaller of the two—got the worst of it. She was backed up to the balcony railing and bent backwards over it as Blond Henchman One tried to dig his forearm into her throat. Not able to fight off his brute strength, Alema instead sent the Force into the metal railing. The railing bent backwards like a sledgehammer had hit it, and deposited the both of them over the edge of the balcony. Now the situation was nearly reversed, Alema had a one-handed grip on the mangled metal, and Blond Henchman One had a one-handed grip on her leg. Both dangled over a very long drop, and neither wanted to test whether such a fall was survivable.

In the distance, a brilliant ball of fire lit up the air, signaling Jysella had successfully activated the rocket's self-destruct sequence.

Panting, Alema grinned at the henchman. "You lose."

She kicked at him several times, until he finally lost his grip and cried out as he disappeared into the abyss below. Doing her best to catch her breath, Alema weakly pulled herself back up onto the balcony. She saw Jysella slouched against the computer consoles inside, similarly trying to catch her breath. They exchanged wry grins, and Alema staggered back into the now empty, burning room.

"So this is what you do now?" Jysella chuckled weakly.

"Where'd the big blond guy on the bridge go?" Alema asked.

Jysella gestured to the frixan pool the bridge was extended over. "Went for a swim. Definitely disagreed with what ate him though."

Alema collapsed against the same bank of computers next to Jysella. "See, told you you'd have fun."

"I'm not sure fun would describe this," Jysella rolled her eyes.

"You had fun," Alema grinned knowingly.

"Fine, yeah, just a little," Jysella allowed. "It's all over now though."

"Cheer up, we're not done yet. We still didn't get to meet their boss," Alema lightly nudged her with her shoulder.

"They probably have something here to tell us where to go next. The senator was corrupt, but not corrupt enough to hire a private army and a buy a missile," Jysella gestured at the destruction all around them.

"If they have a holo-communication's chamber, we can activate it and see who appears," Alema brightened. "Since it's one of the One Sith, he or she will probably appear as some vastly oversized intimidating

version of themselves. One of the things I've learned is that they all have overly large egos."
Jysella arched an eyebrow at Alema. "You must fit right in."
"I know, right," Alema beamed. "It's like I've found a long-lost psychopathic, sociopathic, side of my family that I never knew about."
"We could do that, or we can search the computers," Jysella jerked a thumb over her shoulder at the array they were resting against.
"The ones you blasted?"
"I didn't shoot all of them," Jysella said defensively. "Besides, there's an important looking office back there on the other side of the bridge."
Alema got up and followed Jysella to said office. "I still think we should search for the secret holo-communication's chamber."
"That would mean that the big bad boss would see you and tell *your* boss," Jysella pointed out.
"Oh, you're right," Alema blinked. "Then *you* find the secret room while I create distractions. I mean, what are the odds that the big bad boss will leave his location just lying about?"
"And I thought *I* was the realist," Jysella accessed the computer.
"Hey, look! Our lightsabers," Alema said, having opened a secret safe behind a painting on the wall.
"What? How'd you find that?"
"Please, it's a One Sith hide-out. Why would they care about decorating it with art?" Alema drawled, knocking her hand on the picture frame. "Besides, isn't behind an out-of-place painting the first place people hide their safes? The second would be behind a bookshelf, but One Sith aren't the best readers."
"They're not?"
"Nah, they just look at the Holomags for the pictures," Alema waved a magazine she had found in the vault.
"Stop talking," Jysella muttered, shaking her head. She did, however, reach a hand up and grab her lightsaber when Alema flipped it to her.
"Okay, got it!"
"He really did leave his location?"
"Not sure," Jysella shook his head. "But it looks like the big bad boss owns a luxury yacht that is currently sitting in a private hangar. Last outgoing call from this terminal was here. Downloading all the info now."
"Great, a luxury yacht. I've always wanted to…" Alema trailed off as the large wooden doors to the launch-room were kicked open.
"Look, there they are! Blast them!" The leader of the new group of guards yelled, his face decorated with Ulikuo gem-stones that glittered in the light of the room.

Blasterfire pock-marked the area all around the two Jedi as their lightsabers sprung to life. But even as they held their own, more henchmen poured into the room.
"Geez, what does the One Sith do, buy flunkies at bargain-brand stores?" Jysella said in exasperation. She saw the download finish and yanked the memory crystal from the computer just as a plasma round blew it to bits. She flinched, using the heavy desk for cover as she searched for something to tip the odds back into their favor.
"Hey, I'm having fun," Alema's two sabers blurred to handle the increasing barrage of deadly projectiles coming their way. "We can stay here until morning if we have to."
Jysella instead sprinted to the balcony, scooping up a coil of insulated wire while her lightsaber deflected the withering storm. She deliberately absorbed some of the blaster bolts as she tied the wire to the balcony railing. "Or we can avoid the private army completely."
"You seriously need to learn how to have fun," Alema sighed, the Force assisting her own sprint to Jysella's side so she could cover the younger woman.
"And you really need a new definition of fun," Jysella deadpanned as Alema wrapped her arms around her waist. Amidst the hail of blasterfire, Jysella threw the both of them off the edge. The guards hastily sprinted through the vast room, but it was too late. By the time they got to the balcony, all they could see was a dangling cord and a person-sized hole in the roof of the out-building below.
The Ulikuo-gem-faced henchman held up his comlink. "Contact Lord Enigmatus. Tell him Rar has escaped, she's in the vehicle bay. The rest of you, go after them!"

NUE IV NUE

The doors to the vehicle hangar were blown open as a tank-like landspeeder blew threw them and began to rumble down the forested mountainside. Not long after, a host of speeder-bikes and other landspeeders roared out after them, with the gem-faced henchman in the lead in his own personal landspeeder.
"They *really* want us dead," Jysella said, blinking at the army after them. "I count over a dozen vehicles."
"Great, make sure the turret gets a work-out, will you?" Alema replied, concentrating on avoid a giant tree in the path.
"Will do," Jysella activated their landspeeder's turret. She fired the first shot, yelling in surprise when instead of a straight laser beam, a scatter-shot fired out of the barrel. The shot unintentionally blew apart several speeders at once, shrapnel hitting others.

One of the pursuing drivers was a Skakoan, and a flying rock punctured his pressure suit with the speed of a bullet. Before the Skakoan could adjust, the change in pressure had him expand before gruesomely exploding. An act that also sent his speeder flying off the mountainside and out of sight.
"What is it?" Alema called back.
"Our cannon is a giant scatter-gun," Jysella said, trying to fire at another group. But with the scattering of her shot, all she managed to do was blow several gouges into the mountainside.
"Great, scatter them!" Alema yelled back, as the others got into firing range and began to pepper the area with laser fire. Several glancing hits scorched the landspeeder's armored plating, but nothing serious.
"Trying!" Jysella fired again, but the survivors had learned their lesson and were all spread out.
"Heading for that cave over there!"
"You want to drive a tank through a cave!?"
"It'll work, trust me," Alema laughed.
Though midnight had passed an hour earlier, the sky was still as bright as ever thanks to the light-pollution of the planet-wide city. The reflected haze was enough to let those in the chase see exactly where they were going
"If we die, I'm haunting you," Jysella gritted out as Alema barely avoided two trees in the sharp swerve she undertook.
The tank roared into the cavern that Alema steered them into. On the bright side, the limited entry way meant that the pursuing speeders and speederbikes had to get closer together to follow. Jysella took full advantage of that, firing the scatter-cannon several times in quick succession. Though the Ulikuo-gem-faced leader and three others managed to squirt free, the rest were consumed in a giant fireball that rumbled throughout the cavern. There was enough room for the final four to zig and zag to their heart's content, avoiding Jysella's attacks and scoring more and more hits on her vehicle in turn.
"Bucket of bolts!" Jysella gritted her teeth as a hit from gem-face's speeder shorted out her cannon. She did the next best thing, stood in front of said cannon to intercept the next blasterbolt. It hit, she groaned in pain, but refocused the energy into her hands. With a powerful pulling motion, Jysella gestured to a large, stalactite above and yanked it down.
Gem-faced henchman was so focused on shooting Jysella again that he didn't see the falling dagger of rock until the last second. He looked up as a trickle of pebbles preceded the body, then screamed as the stalactite slammed into him, his speeder disappearing into a fireball.

Alema and Jysella were nearly home-free, when the continuous explosions in the cave finally collapsed it. A giant boulder came crashing down onto the side of their landspeeder, sending it into a twisting spin out of the cave, but into the rocky mountainside. There the landspeeder buckled and flipped over, throwing both to the ground.

"That's it," Alema rasped, spitting out blood. "That's the last time I'm getting into any vehicle with you Jysella."

Jysella smelled the not-so-pleasant scent of fuel and glanced to their ride. The crash had ruptured the fuel-line and the highly flammable liquid was pooling very close to them. She was about to tell Alema that they needed to get clear, when a Force wave sent her flying into a nearby tree, vision swimming.

"Alema Rar," the Force-using henchman chuckled like only a Devaronian could. He leaned down and bodily picked the weakened Twi'lek up by her neck. "There were whispers, rumors that you were still secretly working for the Jedi. And for what? You could have had everything, Rar. Money, fame, power, and you threw that all away. Now, you die."

Alema managed to get her fingers beneath his grip around her neck to choke out a few words. "Don't you want to know why?"

"What?" The Devaronian said in confusion.

That was all the opening Alema needed. Pushing her hands out, she unleashed a point-blank Force-shove that sent the Devaronian skidding across the ground and through the puddle of fuel. He quickly recovered, growling in anger. But before he could take another step, Alema blew him a kiss from her prone position on the ground. A kiss that sent the tendril of Force-Fire she had created in her hand blowing his way. The Devaronian's fuel-covered clothing immediately ignited, and he howled in rage and pain as he flapped about in distress. The pool of fuel beneath his feet ignited, setting off a chain-reaction as the flame raced back up into the landspeeder and ignited the munitions inside.

Both Jysella and Alema managed to roll themselves down the nearby embankment as a massive fireball lit up the dying night sky.

NUE V NUE

The movie continued in the background, with Alema and Jysella somehow making it down the hill and stumbling upon a house at the edge of the Denon Old City slums/New City divide. Battered, bruised, bloodied, and exhausted, the two wounded Jedi knocked on the door. It had opened to reveal two very attractive looking young men, brothers by their appearance, who seemed alarmed at the state of the two

women. The brothers quickly latched onto Alema and Jysella and helped them inside, both apologizing for the minimal amount of medical supplies they had.
Cade was distracted, however, as the entire delegation of Order of Ren knights, suddenly stood and filed out of the room Among them was Tyree Zhan. He saw more than a few expressions change as the mood in the ballroom got even tenser. All that was left now was the ranks of Imperial Knights seated around he, Deliah, and Prince Aidan Fel. Then, a portion of that group likewise filtered out of the room.
"Azlyn," Cade sighed. "If your Imperial Knights decide to defect too, that's very, very bad."
"They are loyal," Azlyn said through gritted teeth, even as her golden-hued eyes tracked the Imperial Knights leaving.
"Just out of curiosity," Cade spoke up. "If my no-longer-favorite Skywalker relative is offed, who benefits the most?"
"That hurts," Aidan muttered almost childlike. "And no one really. My sister is next in line for the throne if anything happens to mom and dad. I can't think of a single reason why they'd try to kill me before the others."
"You *are* in charge of the Imperial Knights once you become thirty," Azlyn reminded. "And you have been very outspoken about the reforms you will institute, distancing the Order of Imperial Knights from the Order of Darkness and Order of Ren. A majority of the Dark Council see this as upsetting the status quo."
"That's still three years a way," Aidan huffed. "Some red-blades are just so inconsiderate."
"Jawa calling an Ewok short," Deliah muttered under her breath. "Stop talking, some of us are still trying to watch the film without thinking about the evil plots that are about to unfold. I don't want to wait another three months to watch this."
The movie had continued throughout their conversation, Alema and Jysella learning that the brothers were actually employed as cleaners in the hangar complex they needed to get to. Even more, the brothers were fans of the Jedi Order and were absolutely shocked that the hangar could be used by Sith. Before plotting any further, Jysella and Alema decided to turn in and get some rest. The brothers gallantly offered up their bedrooms to both women. Jysella bowed her head gratefully and disappeared through one door. Alema though, the camera lingered on, as she beckoned both brothers with a seductive grin and crooked finger. Then, the Rutian Twi'lek closed the door after they both stepped into the room.

"*Jedi Rar, you've been injured and need some rest.*" *One of the brothers gave a token protest.*
"*That just means that you two have to be really gentle with me," Alema replied with a touch of faked vulnerability, removing articles of clothing until her modesty was preserved only by the bandages wrapped around her torso. The two brothers swallowed and looked to one and other, as if trying to convince themselves they weren't dreaming. Alema smiled slyly. "Come on you two. The night is still young.*"
"Both?!" Cade gaped as the brothers moved forward to embrace her, shedding their shirts to reveal muscular torsos.
"They are pretty cute," Deliah grinned as the tasteful love-scene played out, hinting at the acts but never showing any full nudity. "The director and writer are new too, so they were trying to one-up the other films. I think this is the only movie where Alema gets to have two guys at the same time. In *Korriban is Not Enough*, she has two love-scenes, separate, with different guys."
Azlyn nodded. "And one of the guys turns out to be an agent of One Sith Intelligence trying to see if Alema's the traitor they were all looking for."
"You follow the series too, Knight Captain?" Aidan said with an amused smile.
"I occasionally see the reruns on the HoloNet," Azlyn replied distractedly. Her hand slowly slipped down to her lightsaber. "Prince Fel, at this time, I'm going to have to insist you retreat to the *Fallen Star*. There are too many variables to guarantee your safety."
"And like I said," Aidan's smile fell away to reveal a harsher persona, the side he revealed when at the tables of politicians, generals, and Force-users. "No one gets to kill my Knights and lives. They want my head, let them try to take it."
The floor-to-ceiling bay of windows behind them erupted in a violent shrapnel of flying transparasteel. Said shrapnel would have been absolutely lethal if not for the fact that every single Solo, Skywalker, and Force-user still on Aidan's side, had used the Force to place the entire bay of windows in stasis. Aside from the initial cacophonous shattering sound, everything went quiet as thousands of shards of transparent steel were held in mid-air just a second after exploding into the room.
Outside, in the garden, row after row of red blades flared to life. Followed shortly by several shorter rows of purple and silvery blades
"I think they're definitely going to try," Cade deadpanned. "Azyln, we could use some weapons here."

"Let's see, Dark Council red-blades, Ren Knight purple, and Imperial Knight silver," Deliah scanned the field. "Oh, and a small army of gun-toting lackies who probably weren't told that they were cannon fodder."
Azlyn nodded to some of the Imperial Knights who had stayed inside the room, and blasters and vibroswords were passed onto the unarmed, but fight-capable guests, a few even given lightsabers. "We have to hold out for as long as possible. An allied force is making a march on the Dark Citadel as we speak."
"Huh?" Cade's head whipped around to Azlyn.
"Grandmaster Kol Skywalker leads a contingent of Jedi. Supreme Commander Gar Stazi three full battle groups, Hapans, Mandalorians, and Galactic Alliance. Alema Solo, at her last count, had close to a hundred dark-siders from the various orders under the Dark Council marching with her. Current head of the Imperial Knights, Master Antares Draco has nearly all available loyal knights at his command as well. Trust me, the Dark Council will most definitely go through a regime change before this night is over. We merely have to hold out until then."
"Hold out against an army of lightsaber-wielding, highly-trained, homicidal maniacs who can use the Force?" Rein Skywalker, with Kyra Durron at his side, recapped slowly. "Not a problem."
"Definitely not for us," Kyra smiled at the situation, her emerald green lightsaber complementing her dark hair.
"We'll make it," Hapan Crown Prince Jayden Jace Sira'da Djo said royally, his twin Rancor-tooth lightsabers flaring to light in a golden yellow glow. His wife stood a step behind him, a resolute expression on her face as she held bayoneted blasters in both hands.
Standing on either side of them were their bodyguards and closest friends. Arissa Roh, her own silver lightsaber-blaster hybrid weapon spinning to life, held the weapon out in challenge. Taking cover behind an overturned table, Rosynn Gheer dual-wielded a pair of blasters.
"Your consorts will make sure of that, *Chum'da* Jayden, *Chume'da* Tala."
The other Skywalkers and Solos, and the remaining Imperial Knights activated their own lightsabers in Force-coordinated unison, the familiar snap-hiss lighting up the banquet hall in an array of colors.
The movie played on in the background. Aided by the two brothers, Alema and Jysella fought their way onto a luxury yacht as it took off. They managed to get onboard just as it cleared the hangar, throwing out several unfortunate henchman who had been guarding the rear at

the same time. Strangely enough, the fight scene unfolding began mirroring its real-life counterpart.

Alema Rar sent an overweight henchman flying through a golden harp in the ballroom region of the mastermind's luxury yacht, scattering the musicians who had been playing. Jysella nailed another guard with a vibroblade straight through a datapad and into the chest of the surprised henchwoman. The two brothers who had come with them laid down suppressing fire on the upper levels as the mastermind's reserves came swarming into the room and his audience of corrupt politicians fled through side-doors.

Azlyn Rae levitated a barrage of chairs and sent them flying out the shattered windows along with the deluge of splintered transparasteel. A surge of Force-created lightning from the other dark-side minded individuals in the room exploded the projectiles and turned the shards of transparasteel into a fine but deadly powder that leveled the Dark Council attackers closest to the windows. The influential local politicians and non-combatants all fled in the opposite direction of the fight, covered by Cade and Deliah as chaos quickly took hold. At the same time, Jayden's consorts and surprisingly enough, the lead actress from the *Night Herald* movie, let loose a torrent of blaster-fire at the heavily armed cannon-fodder in the garden.

"You're kidding me, right?" Cade said, shaking his head as the actress who played Alema Rar performed an agile flip and roll, flinging out an array of thermal detonators and rapid-firing her blaster pistol in the process. Though most of her detonators ended up getting caught in the back-and-forth tug-of-war Force-waves and exploded harmlessly between the two groups, her blaster shots were lethally accurate and picked off more than a few attackers.

Azlyn, sensing Cade's shock, returned a blast of lightning and laughed. "Ser'nali Loran, fourth generation actress and intelligence-agent, your mom recruited her personally. Was GA intel, but we offered her the lead role in the *Night Herald* series and she defected. One of the benefits to having the series bankrolled by the Fel family."

Cade continued to track the blue Twi'lek's movements, watching in amazement as she flipped and rolled through the exchange of fire until she was flanking a large cluster of Dark Council cannon-fodder. He distinctly heard the words '*Hey boys!,*' before the Twi'lek let loose at point-blank range with an automatic cut-off shotgun and mowed down one whole section of attackers all by her lonesome. "Right, good thing she's on our side."

Unfortunately, Loran's heroics were about the only thing that went right as the torrent of enemy Force-powers, augmented with the

cannon-fodders' cannoning, kept the defenders holed up in the ballroom. The only bright side was that the defenders were holding their own, keeping the attackers from entering too.
"Looks like the real guards have finally showed up," Alema Rar panted, her twin lightsabers shimmering to life as a quartet of dark-robed individuals descended from a staircase.
"Real guards," Jysella laughed, her staff-saber glowing.
The four Force-capable henchman activated their own red blades and surrounded the two women. On the landing above, what appeared to be their leader, emerged. "You've done quite enough damage, Ms. Rar. My boss is most displeased with you. Years of planning down the drain, and for what?"
"What can I say," Alema jerked a thumb back over to the brothers who had helped them. "The light side has better looking guys, less skin and eye issues. Much better in the sack too."
"Die!"
The lightsaber wielding combatants sprung into action.
"You are outnumbered and out-matched! Send out Aidan Fel and you will be allowed to leave unharmed!" One of the Dark Council assault leaders yelled out as the Force-attacks began to stalemate each other.
"Wow, bad guys really do make ultimatums like in the movies," Kyra Durron chuckled, sweat beading her forehead from the excess use of Force.
"That's Darth Achoran," Azlyn sighed, she checked a singed hole in her royal-red cape. "I always thought he was one of the more moderate dark Jedi."
"Don't feel bad, Knight Captain," Aidan pointed out another he recognized on the side of the 'bad guys'. "Imperial Knight Feros over there used to baby-sit me when I was a kid."
"You still are."
"When I was a toddler," Aidan glared at his Knight Captain's correction. "I always thought he was an okay guy too."
"You have five seconds to comply!" Darth Achoran barked out.
"Does he really think you're going to do the Jedi thing and surrender?"
"Hey!" Rein Skywalker objected. "Even we Jedi wouldn't be that stupid."
"Time's up! Time to die!"
At his signal, the army of lightsaber-wielding dark Jedi and associates began to rush the ballroom. The fight quickly resumed its fervor pace as lightsaber clashed with lightsabers in the familiar hissing-screech all across the room. Everywhere one looked there were combatants locked in heated lightsaber duels. Flips, whirls, and feats of acrobatic

amazement accompanied each fast-paced battle, as the blurring lightsabers left multi-colored after-images in the air.
Cade and Deliah stayed low with the blaster-wielding portion of their allies, focusing their attention on what was left of the cannon-fodder. That is, until a red-bladed Force-user charged at them with a roar that sent those in the way staggering to the side. Cade and Deliah focused their fire, but the Dark Council attacker batted each plasma round aside with a growing grin. Just as he was about to take his first swipe at the duo, a silvery blade sliced through the air and split the man in two.
"Am I your favorite cousin again?" Aidan smirked at the two he had saved.
Cade and Deliah exchanged ever-suffering glances and both raised their blasters at him. Aidan's eyes widened when they fired, then he looked over his shoulder and saw that they had picked off another lightsaber-wielding attacker.
"Damn it," Deliah sighed dramatically. "We missed."
"I'll go beat up other people who want to kill me," Aidan said, rolling his eyes. "You're welcome."
What had started out as a showy finesse of Force-attacks had rapidly devolved into an all-out brawl. The humming and buzzing of a multitude of lightsaber blades lit up the inside of the ballroom in swirling flashes and arcs. Blasts of Force Lightning, fire, and telekinetic attacks were traded like a fleet of capital ships exchanging broadsides. The traitorous Imperial Knights and Dark Council forces seemed intent on overwhelming the defenders as they aggressively pushed their attack on the numerically inferior defenders. Not yet joining the battle were the few, yet deadly ranks of the Knights from the Order of Ren. They seemed content to just stand in the garden and watch the two sides do their best to wipe each other out. The defenders were hard pressed as it was, and if the Order of Ren joined in the fray, defeat would have been all but certain.
"That hurt," Rein Skywalker grimaced, clutching his side after receiving a glancing, skewering blow.
"These guys are intense," Kyra Durron panted in turn, clutching one of her arms to her chest and backing up behind Rein. The pain from the said arm's missing hand was shown by the tightening of her forehead and labored breathing.
"Skywalker-Durron curse strikes again?" Rein said weakly.
"We're not dead yet," Kyra answered, but nodded in turn.
All around the defenders were being herded towards the center of the room, the Imperial Knights loyal to Aidan Fel battling to their last

breath. Most had already done so and were dead, sprawled out on the floor amidst all the debris.
Alema, Jysella, and the two brothers were pressed back to the far wall as the Force-using dark Jedi were joined by the last reinforcements to hold the two Jedi at saber-point. With defeat looking very likely, a new figure appeared on the balcony of the starship's ballroom, his robes very much screaming 'dark Jedi.'
"Jedi Master Dyas!" Jysella's eyes widened in recognition. "You're a Sith!?"
"You Jedi, so blind. I've been right under your noses this whole time," the dark Jedi said gloatingly. "And now, in your final moments, you realize the truth too late."
"*Darth Enigmatus," Alema commented, sounding bored. "So you were the guy who drew Denon. My condolences."*
"Alema Rar, Night Herald to Darth Krayt. Wait until he hears that his most trusted spy was a double agent. I am sure that he will reward me substantially for your death."
"You see why the One Sith will eventually lose, 'Sella?" Alema turned to her companion. "So compartmentalized. Darth Idiot up there hasn't even told the council I'm trying to kill him because he wants all the glory for himself."
"Darth Idiot still has five lightsabers and ten blasters pointed at us," Jysella reminded.
"Darth Idiot also thought we'd only ever get this far and didn't bother to check the computer we sliced the minute we boarded this thing," Alema bantered back. "In fact, the engines should be nearing critical right about now. Too bad we muted the automated warning systems."
A rumbling explosion shook the ship, sending everyone flying off their feet as the artificial gravity was temporarily disrupted. They were all deposited unceremoniously onto the ground a second later when the back-up systems kicked in. Ready for the blast and change in momentum, Jysella, Alema, and their two backups promptly began eliminating the last of Darth Enigmatus' men. The Darth himself, realizing that he had been outplayed, decided to flee through another door.
"Alema!"
"I see him," Alema yelled back, taking off in a sprint.
"Damn it, Rar!" Jysella head-butted one of the two red-bladed henchmen left, a large man with a cybernetic jaw-piece, but could disentangle herself from the duo to catch up. She looked over to the brothers. "Go after her! Make sure she doesn't get herself killed. I got the rest of these guys."

To emphasis her statement, she absorbed a stream of lightning from one of the red-blades and sent the cyber-jawed henchman flying into an escape-pod. Before he could recover, she depressed the launch button and ejected him out of the ship. The remaining red-blade slashed at her wildly, but Jysella gracefully danced around the attacks. Then, in the blink of an eye, Jysella used a brief mind-trick to distract her opponent before skewering him with her lightsaber. She let out a breath of relief and grinned at the victory.
The ship chose that moment to pitch forward as it began to fall out of orbit.
"Surrender," Darth Achoran said evenly, a smile of victory on his face as he stepped into the ballroom with the Knights from the Order of Ren in tow. The survivors of the Dark Council's plot were all in a tight circle, starring out at the ring of attackers around them. "You could have spared everyone the death and destruction, Aidan Fel, but you selfishly clung to the belief you would be victorious."
"Like you would have spared them anyways," Aidan Fel replied icily.
"Even got one of your cousins killed." Darth Achoran irreverently sent the corpse of Luke Solo flying across the room with a gesture. "Not that it matters. There's enough Solos and Skywalkers running about the galaxy that I doubt one will even be missed by anyone."
"Darth Achoran," Tyree Zhan spoke up, her voice devoid of emotions and face hidden behind her mask. "You are wrong about one thing."
The Darth in charge of the attack turned to see the Knight of Ren standing right behind him. "What do you mea…"
His words were cut off, a rasp escaping his lips as a purple blade shot right through his heart and emerged out his back. His death in the Force rocked the attacking force, the actions of Tyree stunning pretty much everyone in the room.
Tyree, however, whirled to the others. "True Knights of Ren, you know who you are. Kill them all."
The line of purple blades surged forward, some even turning on their shocked comrades and cutting them down before they could recover. Though there were more Knights of Ren loyal to the Dark Council, those with Tyree had the element of surprise and quickly took out two or three each before the others even began to register what was happening. The traitorous Imperial Knights and attacking Dark Council force suddenly found themselves trapped between the multicolored Jedi blades and the gleaming purple of the Order of Ren.
Alema and Darth Enigmatus fought hand-to-hand near an exposed pool of bubbling engine coolant, explosions sparking all around them. They had both long since abandoned their lightsabers as they exchanged

body-blow after blow. The ship continued to disintegrate all around them, hurling back towards Denon like a meteor. It seemed insane to continue to fight in such conditions, but the individuals in the One Sith were far from sane.

A kick from Darth Enigmatus sent Alema flying backwards and onto a small service platform directly above the shattered engine housing, her weight causing the platform to slowly begin to descend. He jumped onto the same platform and wrapped his hands around her neck, snarling as he did.

"Why can't you be a good girl and die, Ms. Rar!" He pressed hard, her dangling lekku growing closer and closer to the bubbling liquid below. Gasping for air and trying to free herself, Alema glared spitefully at the Darth. "You first!"

Alema kicked the Darth between his legs, causing him to scream in pain and loosen his grip. With barely millimeters to spare, Alema was able to pull her lekku free of the predicament and spring back to her feet. By then, however, the platform was nearly in the burning engine housing. With another solid punch to his kidneys and kick to the Darth's knees, Alema dropped him to the floor of the platform. She then kicked him into the boiling liquid and sprung clear onto an adjacent catwalk. The man's death in the Force flashed wildly, the engine housing exploding completely and causing girders and other support beams to collapse all around her.

"Jedi Rar!" The brothers came running in, rifles at the ready. Both were bloodied and exhausted, but determined to help.

"It's alright. Let's get out of here," Alema breathed out, allowing them to support her.

"*What about that Sith Lord?" One of the brothers asked.*

Alema continued forward, not paying the ruined engine housing a second glance. "Darth Enigmatus decided to engineer his own exit."

The trio limped towards the room's exit, only to have a massive explosion tear a hole in the bulkhead and sever the way out.

"Alema!" Jysella's disheveled figure appeared in the doorway. She took note of the chasm that had formed between her and the Jedi and paled. "Alema!"

"Go! Get to an escape pod!" Alema yelled out, her half of the ship continuing to disintegrate.

"And you!? What are you going to do?"

"Just go!" Alema ordered, trying to smile as a haze of sparks rained down around her and the brothers. "Someone has to start preparing for the One Sith's return!"

"Alema..." Jysella looked crushed.

"Just go," Alema said more gently. "I always knew I'd go out with a bang. Never was good at being peaceful and Jedi-like."
Jysella swallowed heavily, but gave one last nod and took off.
Those planet-side watched as the large luxury yacht tore itself into several large pieces upon reentry, chains of fiery explosions consuming most of the vessel. A lone escape pod shot free of the wreck as the primary section of the ship erupted completely in a blaze of white and red. The fight was over, the senate saved, but at what cost?
Compared to the start of the fight, the last few minutes had been a slaughter. Demoralized and stunned by the death of their leader, caught between two rows of lightsabers, the Dark Council's attackers were either massacred or quickly surrendered and hoped for mercy. Even then, those that had fought on had done so with fervent and almost manic fury.
Cade knelt by his younger cousin, a hand on Rein's shoulder and one on Kyra Durron's back. Despite the pain he was feeling, he tried to do his best to offer what little comfort he could. When one had a family as large as the Skywalker-Solo clan, the odds of dying were definitely increased regardless of their Corellian background.
"Don't you die on me, Skywalker," Kyra Durron whimpered hoarsely, holding one of Rein's hands in her lone remaining hand, willing her strength into him. But just looking at Rein Skywalker's still form, it was painfully obvious that no amount of willing was going to save him. "We have a curse to beat, come on."
"Kyra," Cade said gently.
"Cade," Kyra's eyes squeezed close. "If only this stupid nerf-herder had concentrated on his fight."
"That Sith was going to kill you if Rein hadn't thrown his saber at him," Deliah murmured, looking on helplessly.
"Then it should be me dying, not him!" Kyra yelled out in a choked sob, sprawling herself over Rein's chest as his end grew ever nearer. Her Force-bond allowed her to feel those ticking seconds with agonizing clarity, and she was completely helpless to reverse what seemed like the inevitable.
Deathly still, Rein definitely looked worse for wear, lightning burns and three separate stab-wounds marring his torso. His presence in the Force was rapidly decreasing as his breathing grew more and more labored.
Cade glanced over his shoulder at Deliah, and the two shared a long look. Finally, Deliah nodded once then stepped forward and detached Kyra from the younger Skywalker.

"Deliah…what…no…let me…" Kyra tried to fight off Deliah, but then trailed off as Cade knelt on both knees next to his younger cousin. "What is he doing?"
"He's probably one of the strongest Force-sensitives in this room," A bloodied Azlyn Rae answered softly.
"No way," one of the Knights of Ren shook his head. "I can't feel anything from him. I mean, apart from slight sensitivity."
Hapan Crown Prince Jayden looked surprised as well. "I thought he wasn't able to use the Force apart from a parlor trick or two. Isn't that why you two have a salvage business instead of a 'saving the galaxy' business?"
"He hates the spotlight," Deliah said wryly.
There was more surprise echoing in the Force, and the crowd parted as a battle-weary Tyree Zhan carried Luke Solo's body over to Cade, her mask preventing anyone from seeing the raw emotions on her face. She stopped in front of Cade, looking at him almost expectantly.
"Set him down next to Rein," Cade directed gently. "He hasn't been gone for long, we still have a chance."
Tyree did as told, and then knelt opposite of Cade on Luke's other side, hands in her lap.
"Here goes my best kept secret," Cade murmured under his breath. He held out a hand over Rein and one over Luke, then closed his eyes. The Force pulsed outwards from him, but not in a violent manner. Rather, to those in the room, it felt as if a comforting warmth had descended and filled the air. The feeling of being a little child and safely sheltered in the arms of a mother or father, of contentment, happiness. Many released breaths they hadn't realized they had been holding, temporarily forgot that they had been fighting for their lives only minutes earlier as they relaxed, smiled. Despite the situation, they suddenly had a feeling that everything would be alright.
The Force continued to pulse out from Cade, his hands glowing as healing energy poured into both downed Jedi. To the complete shock of everyone watching, Rein Skywalker's lightning burns began to heal before their very eyes. The deep cuts that nearly disfigured Luke Solo's own face were mending themselves as currents of Force-energy repaired the damage faster than even the best bacta could. *Thump, thump. Thump, thump.* It was as if Cade's steady heartbeat could be heard by all as he appeared to do the impossible.
But Cade was far from being all-powerful. After nearly several long minutes filled with amazement and wonder, the golden nimbus of light surrounding the Jedi began to waver, the peaceful expression on Cade's face becoming stressed as he struggled to bring one back from

the brink and the other back from the dead. The healing began to slow, the wounds no longer repairing as fast.
Azlyn needed no prompting and stepped forward, her hands resting on his shoulders and her own Force energies flowing into Cade. Her bond with him, though weak, flared back to full strength as she gave him everything she had left. Her eyes were closed, her expression one of sheer concentration as her own energies joined the swirling golden nimbus around the two downed Jedi.
From her crumpled position on the ground, Kyra, saw the Imperial Knight Captain's actions through tear-filled eyes and immediately reached out with her lone hand and rested it on Azlyn's legs. Though completely exhausted physically and emotionally, the descendant of the famed Jedi Master Kyp Durron offered the healing meld every last ounce of strength she could dig up.
The others, realizing what was happening, closed their eyes and began to lend their own strength. The tranquil feeling returning full force in the room, emboldening the others to give more of their strength to the kneeling Cade. Imperial Knights, Knights of the Order of Ren, Jedi, non-aligned Force-sensitives, they all became united in the sole purpose of saving Rein and Luke. United and powered by the hope Cade Skywalker was giving them all as they began to truly believe the two could be healed.
"Wow," Jayden Djo's wife, Tala, murmured next to Deliah.
"Yeah," Deliah smiled sadly. "Light side, dark side, it doesn't matter. They can use the Force, and because of that, they're family. And this family isn't going to let two of their own vanish without a fight."
The Force swirled throughout the room, the Force-sensitives continuing to lend what strength they had left as Cade mended the broken bodies of his two younger cousins. The minutes ticked by, several of the Force-sensitives bowing out as they expended the last of their energy. But still Cade stayed focused, knitting flesh, mending wounds in the Force.
Outside, the Bastion night was slowly giving way to day, the sky lightening and the stars retreating one by one. Still, Cade continued to work, the warmth of the healing energies keeping everyone in the room comfortable despite the chilly dawn air whistling through the battle-ravaged windows.
Due to not being dead yet, Rein Skywalker was the first to be healed, his labored breathing disappearing as the two holes in his lungs were fixed and his stab wounds disappearing to become very faint, pale scars on his torso. His eyes flew open in shock as the memory of being

stabbed came back to him, but as he sat up and looked around, he blinked in confusion.
"I'm not dead?"
That was all Kyra needed to break formation as she launched herself at him and wrapped him up in a tight hug, sobbing his name. "No, you're not, stupid nerf-herder! Don't you ever be so nerf-brained again!"
Smiles broke out at the reunion, but the job wasn't finished yet. Due to his *being* dead, Luke Solo's healing was proving to be a bit more challenging. Those contributing to the healing meld were decidedly less in number now, only the strongest of those in the group remaining in the link. Among them were Tyree, Azlyn, Jayden, and a hopeful Ben Solo and reassuring Brynn Horn.
"Ari, can they do it?" Tala looked to the lone Force-sensitive among Jayden's consorts.
Arissa Roh, descendant of *Chume'doro* Hiana and Dathomiri Ijun, kept her face impassive as she focused on her rejuvenation trance.
"*Chume'da* Tala*,* I have never heard of anyone being brought back from death before. Then again, I have never seen anyone as mortally wounded as Rein Skywalker be healed so quickly either."
"He'll do it," Deliah said with resolute assuredness. "He healed me once and I was dead. He doesn't let those close to him die early if he can help it."
That caused several of those near Deliah to look at her in surprise.
"Long story for another time," Deliah winked. "But trust in Cade. He'll make things right."
The movie in the background continued to go on even with no one watching. Jysella had returned to the Denon Temple a complete mess and had many explanations to give. But since she couldn't tell the Jedi Order about the One Sith for fear of more One Sith infiltrators, she had to leave out all references to Alema and make up a story about the dead Senator having a body-double and that the real senator had been on the luxury yacht that had exploded in the sky above Denon. It was believable enough but she still had to deal with a lot of questions.
When the meeting was over, night had fallen once more and Jysella left the building and stepped out into the Denon air. With a sigh, she looked up into the sky. Despite the light pollution, she forced her mind's eye to see the endless field of stars high above, Alema's words echoing in her mind.
'Compared to the trillions of living beings in the galaxy, what's my life worth?'
"Alema, if you're watching, I'll get the job done. I'll finish what you started." Jysella murmured, her heart heavy and mind whirling with

thoughts and emotions. "You sacrificed so much to protect us all, I hope, wherever you are in the Force, you're getting the reward you definitely deserve."
The camera panned further and further back, before re-centering over a burnt-out but intact portion of the luxury yacht embedded in part of the Old City. It zoomed in past the bulkhead and to an equally charred bedroom that had once been the quarters for Darth Enigmatus. There, one tattooed Twi'lek was writhing in the bed beneath the sheets as she enjoyed the attentions of her two muscular lovers, a lazy grin on her face as she rubbed each of their backs. Almost as if spotting the camera, she looked up and gave it a lascivious wink and the movie cut to the end credits and song.

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"You're sure about this?" Dark-skinned Jariah Syn said dubiously, settling into the worn pilot's seat of the *Mynock*.
"You want to tell Deliah, Lover of the Great Romance Stories, to kick them off?" Cade asked with a smile, taking the co-pilot's chair.
"No thanks, not suicidal. Just...you know that we're going to have a whole bunch of other people after us with those two on board."
"I thought you 'lived for the boom'," Cade remarked, flipping the switches as the *Mynock* hummed to life.
"When I'm the one causing it, yeah," Jariah replied. "Not when people are trying to lower the 'boom' on us. Besides, running around with a red-blade with a Death Mark on her head isn't exactly my idea of life-prolonging."
"Her blade is purple."
"The Order of Ren is practically the same as the rest of the dark-side orders out there," Jariah replied dryly. "They all want to kill something, and I just prefer we don't paint a giant target on our ship saying 'ooo, pick me'."
"Think about it this way, instead of gaining a red-blade, we gain two lightsaber-wielding bodyguards."
"We're going to need it," Jariah sighed in resignation. "Fine, fine, they can stay. But if you recruit any more people, i.e. your relatives, we're going to need a bigger ship."
"We'll get Rav to sell us one," Cade shrugged. "You didn't complain about the last relative I decided to bring aboard."
"She's my girlfriend, why would I complain about that?" Jariah remarked with a laugh, pushing the ship out of the *Crimson Axe*.
"Besides, her dad would shoot me if I said a bad word about his daughter."
The others onboard the *Mynock* filed into the cramped cockpit.

"All settled in?" Cade looked over his shoulder to Deliah and Jariah's girlfriend.
Ahnah Rawk grinned, her golden-brown eyes glimmering with happiness. "Yeah. We have them bunking in the guest quarters."
"It's going to take some getting used to, being away from the Order," Luke Solo exhaled, surveying the cockpit. He then reached down and took the hand of the woman next to him. "But I think the company will more than make up for it."
"Smooth," Tyree Zhan said softly, giving his hand a squeeze. She looked almost unrecognizable in standard spacer's garb instead of her customary Order of Ren robes and mask, Sith tattoos not withstanding. "I think the company will also help…I gave up one family, but I think I've found another."
"You got that right," Deliah said determinedly. "We here of the *Mynock* look out for one and other. No matter where your Force decides to send us next, we're in it for the long-haul."
"So where's 'next'?" Luke asked.
"The Mandalorian Civil War is picking up," Jariah mentioned. "Great for salvage, Mando-iron still sells for buckets of credits."
"The Ssi-ruuvi Imperium started feuding with the Bakuran Hegemony again," Ahnah suggested. "Both sides are still coming out with rare-tech that gets a premium on the markets."
"And we'll pass by Kiffu on the way," Deliah said brightly.
"Bantha shot at us the last time we visited," Cade pointed out. "And the Kiffu guard tried to arrest us."
"Jariah shouldn't have been making out with Ahnah on the steps of the capitol building," Deliah deadpanned, causing the two in question to blush furiously when both Luke and Tyree looked to them in amazement.
"To be fair, Ahnah had just agreed to travel with us," Jariah grumbled. "I was a little happy about that."
"Just a little," Ahnah demonstrated with her fingers very close together to the laughter of the others.
"If you are not adverse, I know of an ancient Sith temple," Tyree spoke up. "It has been undisturbed since the time of the War of the Fittest, so its artifacts will be untouched as well."
"A two-thousand year old Sith temple, undisturbed?" Luke looked to his girlfriend in surprise.
"It's protected by powerful Sith ghosts that drive the weak-minded mad," Tyree elaborated almost excitedly.
Jariah and Deliah looked to the Force-sensitive members of the crew, saw the contemplative expressions on their faces, and groaned.

"I vote Mandalorian Civil War," Jariah said, holding a hand up but sounding as if he had surrendered to the inevitable as he covered his face with his other hand.
"I vote for it too," Deliah agreed.
"The Sith temple sounds interesting," Cade raised an eyebrow.
"Yeah," Ahnah Rawk nodded.
"Looks like Tyree really wants to go there, I'm in," Luke voiced.
"Where to?" Jariah sighed.
"Mizra," Tyree answered with a tilt of her head.
"The things I do for family," Jariah muttered, though a smile tugged at the corner of his lips. "Cade, input the calculations for the jump to lightspeed."
"Done," Cade said after a moment. He looked over his shoulder at the others. "Might want to strap yourselves in."
Jariah Syn reached forward and gripped the hyperspace initiator. "Mizra and creepy Sith temple, here we come!"
And the *Mynock* jumped to hyperspace, taking its crew on to their next great adventure.
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